

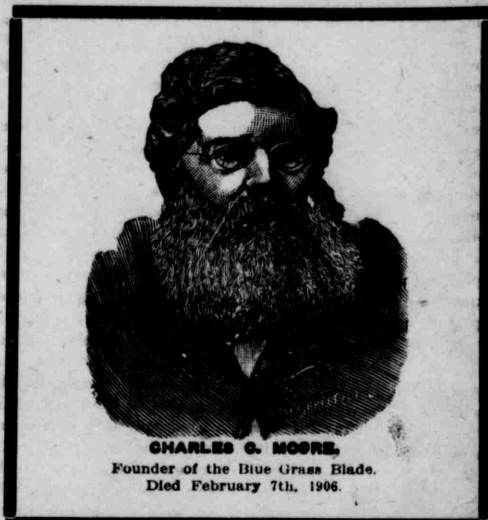
BLUE GRASS BLADE

WE AIM TO CUT DOWN ERROR AND ESTABLISH TRUTH.

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EDITORIAL

Always dodge regret.

Virtue brings its own reward.

Salvation is free now only to paupers.

Youth stands for progress, age for petrification.

The preachers want no allies in the work of regeneration.

With plutocracy at the helm, it is no wonder that the ship of state is rapidly drifting to the—er—what do you call it.

Freethought is the bursting bud of intellectual life. Orthodoxy is but the withered flower. Freethought is the wholesome grain. Orthodoxy is but the husk.

Labor must shake off the accursed interdict of present political leaders and give place in the industrial ranks to every man who is willing to work in the knowledge that whatsoever he creates, that he shall surely have.

"Be good and you will be lonesome," is the motto of the average man of today. It is half a truth, yet wholly a lie. We may never see wealth without want, virtue without vice, but the race can devote itself to grander aims than chasing the delusive dollar.

If Christ really died to save sinners, he made a woeful failure of his mission. Had god, that god, who knoweth all things before they were, had he cast the human horoscope, we are forced that he would never have given old Noah a hint to get in out of the wet.

If we may judge idols as we judge men, then indeed, are we justified in laying the hammer upon

the golden calf. We know that at its shrine worship, those who fatten on the fruits of another's toil, that its chief priests and Levites are the money lords who keep back the laborer from a table which groans beneath the weight of viands wrung from earth's bosom by his toil.

RICHES DO NOT INDUCE REFORM.

The world has ever been such a cruel mother to her most deserving children that a reformer, in these days, to be successful, must be rich or he must starve. The proposition is an anomaly, but it is true. Wealth usually precludes all desire for reform, and yet, in human history there are instances, though rare, wherein men and women of means have devoted their lives to the betterment of society without reference to religion, but they form the exception to the general rule.

What the Blade started out to say in this relation was that the very persons who have laid their jewels of intellect at the feet of this great world, who have given a labor of a life to its service, have been denied, mocked and left to starve or subsist on scant provision. On the other hand, he, whose conscience was of so flexible a character that he could readily conform to every insipid demand made by a rotten society, who could permit himself to float gently along with the current without regard for those brave minds that sought to swim against the stream, have been feted and flattered, honored and paid beyond their due.

No better instance of this could be found than in the inability of American Freethinkers to maintain a more active propaganda of their principles. Only a few years ago, there were a number of lecturers in the field, all poorly paid, so miserably compensated that today there is not one to be found in the entire country. Not one among them, but who was deserving of better support. Men and women of intelligence and power, of education and ability, of pluck and energy, cannot afford to give their talents to any cause that refuses them even a bare support. The people are fast learning that while religion has caused many of the ills that afflict humanity, it offers no cure, and those who have not learned the lesson must have it carried to them. Orthodox Christianity is no commercial paladium or industrial deity. We must look elsewhere for relief. If this relief is to be extended through the aid of Freethought then we must wake up from our lethargy and cease dreaming in order to begin work.

Why should not such a move be made? We have every reason to be hopeful. We have a glorious cause to advocate, a cause resplendent with a lustre that shines the brighter as the years roll by. We have a philosophy the application of which tends to improvement here and such an end must continue improvement here and elsewhere. He who lives not for himself alone, brings happiness by his human consideration of others. This is the very essence of Freethought. In it lies the power and glory of the race. Did we honor and revere the memories of the heroes of the past, we would take up their work with grace but it is for the Freethinkers to say whether it shall be properly applied or not.

One thing is true, when a man's sympathy extends no farther than the circumference of his cash box, he is beyond human redemption. He becomes the dardanari, who reaps where he has not sown. He worships at the shrine of those who fatten on the fruits of another's labor. He will pray, "give me this day my daily bread," but he has no concern how much his brethren can get. Wealth and sympathy for humanity are not close neighbors and are seldom on terms of calling acquaintance. The one kneels at the feet of the golden calf, the other carries on a labor of love for the sake of his fellows.

Do you want reform in politics? Then look to the man who wears his jeans tucked in his boots. Do you want reform in religion? Then look to the men who dares and does. Do you want reform in economics? Then get it from those who by long years of toil know and realize the toiler's most pressing wants. Do you want reform in the domestic relations? Then heed the voices of those who have lived and suffered under a system that is brutal and unjust. In short, do you want to witness a general reform all along the line? Then wake up, and join the army of laborers in the vineyard, not of Christ, but of humanity.

Courage, faint heart! Remember that every man, since the dawn of human history, who becomes dissatisfied with existing conditions and dared to cry out against prescriptive right entrenched in brutal wrong, has been denounced and denied by the toad-eaters of his day. It was not intended that any man born of woman should sit with folded hands and starve, while all about him the potential wealth of nature beckoned.

Religion asserts that every hour of mortal man is wasted, unless it be burdened with a care. Such a dark doctrine beclouds the radiant star of hope, which burns in every human heart. Not a hope of some expected bliss in the dim and vaporous clouds, but a substantia hope of better things to be reaped here. Modern philosophers insist that a life ungemmed with harmless social pleasure is not worth the living, and we are bound to suspect that they are nearly right.

WHERE RELIGIOUS FREEDOM IS MADE A NECESSITY.

Russia is a truly Christian nation and we are compelled to go back to the Dark Ages of Christian rule to find a parallel to the horrors that are being enacted there while every day brings the empire of the Muscovite nearer the brink of the abyss and the principal newspapers of the country reflect the despair of the situation.

Devout believers in all that the Christian faith portends, capable of swallowing the Athanasian creed like an anaconda taking an unwashed goat, relying on the power and efficiency of the vicarious atonement, there are no peoples in Europe more essentially Christian than those within the domain of the Czar. As followers of the Prince of Peace one might expect toleration and charity at their hands and if smitten to turn the other cheek and with humility practice the "resist not evil" panacea. Yet the awful scenes enacted at Seidlee in Russian Poland have had their counterparts in other portions of the empire, notably the Caucasus, but the rigid press censorship has prevented the horrible details from percolating through the lines and reaching the outside world.

The Russian patriot must look with grief and anguish upon the coming storm with so much of ruin and suffering for the people. Torn with interne-cine dissension and strife it is powerless against a foreign foe, while even the advocates of freedom are compelled to counsel their followers to patience in that a sanguinary revolution, which now seems imminent, will be taken by the bureaucracy as a convenient cloak for murder and pillage. There can be no doubt in the mind of the average reader that fully one-half of the horrors enacted in that empire of famine and death never reach the outside of their borders. On every hand there comes a cry of despair. Official Russia is tottering to destruction. This fearful judgment has been wrought by its own handiwork. It is a case of almost self-destruction, of suicide.

The recent slaughter of Jews in Poland is heralded as a brave stand made by the bruta soldiery of the Czar in their determination to stand up for Jesus. If the Jews would renounce their religion and embrace the Greek Catholic church, their troubles in Russia would cease. If they did they might deserve all they were getting and more. So long as the Jew determines to maintain his racial and religious independence the balance of the civilized world will stand by him. The gravamen of his offense at Seidlee, in the eyes of the Russian authorities, was simply that he had dared to form an organization for self-defense. The terrorists, however, precipitated the attack on the town, with its pillage and murder, by their premeditated assault on the police and the soldiers as the only policy they can fall to is to render abortive the half-way measures of pacification proposed by the premier.

As matters now stand Russia is divided into two hostile camps separated by a sea of blood. With the scenes that are of daily occurrence, the officials are doomed to fall between the forces of reaction and those of revolution, while the cafes and concert halls are crowded with merry-makers, domiciliary searches and consequent arrests are being doubled every day. It is currently reported that between the first and tenth of August last, no less than two thousand, five hundred arrests were made in St. Petersburg. Not a member of the intellectual class, when he arises from his bed in the morning, is sure that before night falls he will find himself in the fortress of St. Peter and St. Paul, whose dungeons are below the surface of the swift-flowing waters of the Neva. The innocent blood that is being shed every day in Russia lends force to Napoleon's caustic comment on the Tartar composition of the race, with its inherited love of cruelty.

Intellectual stagnation and religious stultification are the main causes of this wretched condition of affairs. Not until the people throw off the yoke of the priesthood can they hope to be free. When the Muscovite obtains religious freedom and the power of the priest is broken all other reforms will follow with a stability that can never check their progress and the day of Russia's enlightenment will have dawned.

THE WAY ONE LOOKS AT IT

In this week's Letter Box, will be found a communication from a valued friend, a Freethinker, and a fearless advocate of the cause of human liberty, Louis Roser, in which he expresses a disagreement with the Blade for its editorial expression, namely, "Our human life is just what we make it." Our friend and critic asserts that this, a great mistake and points to the cruel punishments imposed upon our late editor C. C. Moore and Moses Harman in support of his contention.

Closer analysis of existing conditions will prove the truth of the sentiment expressed by the Blade. Freethinkers, themselves, are, in the main, responsible for the tortures inflicted upon the patriotic reformers he mentions. Here we are in a vast majority, yet powerless to assert our rights for lack of united endeavor. Did we but show our strength and assert that strength in the enactment of legislation through the medium of the ballot box, there would be no Comstockian laws on the statute books of this republic and the postal censorship which

sent both men to jail would be either modified or completely eradicated.

The foregoing suggestions refer to Freethinkers in a collective sense only, but applying it to the individual, we are compelled to admit that in a measure, both men punished for having pursued a course of conduct of their own volition. Both could have escaped punishment by a non-advocacy of the principles in which they believed, hence, they assisted very materially in shaping the consequences.

Fanatical foolishness may have been the immediate cause of their incarceration. Collectively and individually Freethinkers might have averted both wrongs. Hence "our human life is just what we make it." Take our own case, for example. Instead of toiling day after day as a labor of love, the Blade's editor might enjoy greater ease, more comforts, more leisure hours, by pursuing some other vocation. We have preferred to keep the Blade going and in this way we have voluntarily selected the hardships we are compelled to face in so doing.

THE THORN OF INFIDELTY CAN NOW FURNISH THE GRAPES.

Religion and business will not mix. Every Freethinker has understood the self-evident truth in that proposition for years, but it is only just beginning to dawn on the minds of theologians.

Only a week or so back, the Blade made comment upon the financial crash which fell upon the Presbyterian banking institution in Philadelphia from which its pious president had filched seven millions of dollars and committed suicide to escape the public wrath. Unwilling to face the men, women and children he had robbed, he was willing to appear before the God he worshipped and give an account of his life. From another source we learn that in a southern city a certain restaurant was opened with religious exercises, dedicated by a coterie of preachers. The proprietor announced to the public that it was his purpose to open the hashfactory every day with prayer, a custom he kept up until one day its doors were closed for lack of patronage and a hiatus in the cash register. These instances will suffice to show that you cannot measure the depth of a man's religion and his worth of character by the length of his face on Sunday.

In regard to the Philadelphia banking institution, we are told that the Receiver, appointed by the courts, announces that it will open again for business, that the depositors will be paid in full, and he assigns the failure to have been caused altogether by a union of church and business. On this subject he says:

"The Directors all mean well. They are all Presbyterians, and being of one religion, they trusted the religion too much. They were willing to permit one man of their faith to run the institution to suit himself."

Additional side lights that have been thrown upon this unsavory bit of religious hypocrisy might have induced the receiver to have even gone further, but it was, doubtless, consideration for the family of the self-murderer, that held him back. He might have added that all his professed piety, President Hipple, knew a pretty woman from an ancient painting, a jack-pot from a prayer book, but when touched for a little charity gift he muttered, "Good bye John." The Directors "trusted the religion too much." What a confession to make in the face of the heathen! Why send Bibles and Whiskey to the Orient to instill the same kind of a religion into the minds of a people who so much superior in matters of business honesty? Hipple might have assiduously prayed for the salvation of the neighbor who could poison his dog, and mutter the prayer in public, but while the onlookers had their heads bent in reverence for the occasion, Hipple had his hand in the cash box extracting the coin for his own use.

But the best part of this is yet to come. Receiver Earle has a remedy for reorganizing the bank. The remedy is an awful blow to religion. He does not suggest that brethren of one faith can dwell together in business unity, but make up the new of Directors of representatives of different sects, and even suggests that an "Infidel" be included on it. Read the following:

"My remedy for reorganizing banks where the directors have all been of one faith is to have a directorate composed of one Jew, one Gentile, one Catholic, one Methodist, one Presbyterian, one Baptist, and one Lutheran. Yes, and I accept the suggestion that a conservative Infidel of business reputation might be a good man to have on the board."

Commenting on this suggestion the American Israelite, a Hebrew publication, published in Cincinnati, says, "Mr. Earle's views are not such as will tend to make him popular with the pious brethren, but they are, nevertheless, sound," and the Blade agrees with the sentiment.

It is a wide gulf between a Hipple and a Stephen Girard. Philadelphia domiciled both. The for-

(Continued on Page 4, first column.)